

NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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For Immediate Release

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Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois announced today that on March 17, 2004, FRANK C. BIESER, JR., age 34, of 329 Central Avenue, Collinsville, Illinois, and RICHARD D. MELTON, age 46, of 94A Boatdock Road, Patoka, Illinois, were indicted by a Federal Grand Jury sitting in East St. Louis, Illinois, on various drug related charges. Count 1 charges both defendants with Conspiracy to Distribute and Possess with Intent to Distribute Marihuana from 1996 through 2004, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1), 841(b)(1)(B), and 846. The penalties on Count 1 are a mandatory minimum of a term of imprisonment of 5 years and a maximum of 40 years, a fine of up to \$2 million dollars, and at least 4 years supervised release. Counts 2, 3, and 4, charge BIESER with deliveries of marihuana, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1) and 841(b)(1)(D). The penalties that can be imposed in those counts are a term of imprisonment up to 5 years, a fine of up to \$250,000, and at least 2 years supervised release. The violations took place in St. Clair and Clinton Counties, Illinois. An indictment is a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury.

The investigation is being conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Illinois State Police. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Ralph M. Friederich.